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HOLBEIN

THE YOUNGER

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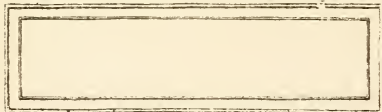
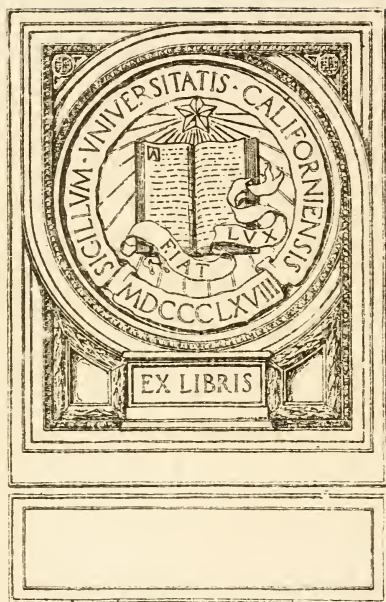
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HOLBEIN
THE YOUNGER



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Holbein

The Younger

GERMAN SCHOOL

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PORTRAIT OF HOLBEIN

BY HIMSELF

This portrait of Holbein, from a colored drawing now in the Basle Museum, was taken by himself when about twenty-five years of age. The expression denotes, in a remarkable degree, keen observation and quiet reserve power. He wears a red hat and a grey coat with a black velvet border.

Hans Holbein the Younger

BORN 1497: DIED 1543
GERMAN SCHOOL

F. M. ROBINSON

"MAGAZINE OF ART," VOL. 9

IN the year 1497, when the Great Maximilian was Emperor of the West, Hans Holbein the younger was born in the imperial city of Augsburg, wherein his father, his uncle, his mother's father, and, indeed, most of the family, were in business as painters and decorators. Those were the great days of Augsburg; the city, on the direct route to Italy, was the richest commercial town of South Germany, and it was also the frequent halting-place of Maximilian, his court, and his armies. Its intercourse with Italy, too, had great influence in the development of artistic ideas; and though one or two mediæval buildings heighten the contrast, Augsburg is essentially a city of the Renaissance. . . . The elder Hans Holbein took both his boys—Ambrosius and Hans—into his studio, and the three worked together until the year 1516. The work was for the most part done in common, but a book of sketches by the younger Hans, preserved in the Berlin Museum, shows us that he was already a better draughtsman than his father.

In the year 1515 Ambrosius and Hans Holbein went to Basle—at that time a centre of learning and enlightenment. It was its boast that every house contained at least one learned man; and the great Amerbach press, which had then been founded for twenty years, must have been an immense attraction to men of letters. John Amerbach had recently died, and business was carried on by his still more famous partner, John Froben. Froben and a forgotten schoolmaster were Holbein's first patrons, and the well-known printer's mark that adorns so many of the Froben press books was designed by him on his arrival in Basle. He also found another powerful patron in Jacob Meyer, the first commoner who ever held office as Burgomaster of Basle, and under whose rule the reformation of the city laws was peaceably carried out. But the local magnate, powerful in his time and city, is remembered chiefly as the original of Holbein's first portrait painted in Basle, and as the art patron for whom the Meyer Madonna was painted eight or nine years later. With two such influential patrons as Froben and Meyer, Holbein's position must have been assured; but in 1517 he left the city and spent two years in travel. At Lucerne and Altorf he left traces of his passing, but nowhere else do we follow him. It is said, on doubtful authority, that he never set foot in Italy; but the astonishing development of his powers suggests that he must, by a sight of some of the masterpieces of Italian art, have had a new ideal suggested to him at about this time.

In 1519 Ambrosius Holbein died, and we know that in this year Hans returned and settled in Basle, for his portrait of Bonifacius Amerbach, son of Amerbach the

printer, bears this date. The next year, 1520, so important in history as the year of Luther's excommunication, of Raphael's death, and of the meeting of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, was also an important year in Holbein's life. In it he became a citizen of Basle, and a member of the Painters' Guild; and in it Erasmus, after an absence of six years, returned to Basle, and returned as a resident. The learned Dutchman, the first man of letters since the old days of Rome, had accepted the post of editor and publisher's reader to his friend, John Froben, in whose house he was to make his home. . . . Between Holbein and Erasmus some sort of friendship quickly sprang up, a friendship founded rather on mutual admiration than the intimate interchange of ideas; for Erasmus spoke no modern language except his native Dutch, and by the inscriptions on his portraits Holbein betrays an ignorance of the Latin language, and a capacity for phonetic spelling, tempered by German pronunciation, that are truly astonishing. But despite this ignorance of Latin, Holbein did undoubtedly enjoy some measure of intimacy with Erasmus, and the sketches with which he illustrated the latter's "Praise of Folly" prove that by some means he managed to get at the meaning of Latin books.

The tendency of the Reformation was unfavorable to art, and but for the patronage of Meyer, Holbein would have received no important commission in Basle. Easel pictures of this period are rare, and Holbein seems chiefly to have been employed in designing for stained glass, decorating furniture, and illustrating books. The impressive, terribly realistic "Dead Christ," painted in 1521, and now in the Basle Museum, was probably not a commission, but painted merely as a study. Never again did he depict death with such solemn dignity. . . . The whole point of the "Dance of Death" [a series of small wood-cuts designed by Holbein] is in the malicious pleasure with which Death beholds the consternation of his victims: pope, emperor, preacher, nun, are alike unready for his coming; rich and poor, young and old, make the same desperate, vain resistance. The "Dance of Death," like the Bible illustrations, are undated; but the drawings must have been made some time before 1527, for in that year Hans Lützelberger, their engraver, died, leaving his work unfinished, and for more than ten years the publication was delayed, it being impossible to find a wood-engraver competent to render the action and the expression of the tiny faces. The dramatic feeling, the raciness, the grim humor and abundant fancy of these little masterpieces, as well as the extreme care of their composition and drawing, prove that Holbein must have thrown himself heart and soul into their composition.

But book-illustrating was poorly-paid work, and as time went on, Holbein found the difficulty of living increase. He had, moreover, added to his cares by marriage with a widow, Elsbeth Schmidt, a woman some years older than himself. There may be some truth in the legend that Holbein was driven by his wife's tongue from Basle, but the real reason of his leaving was probably that mentioned by Erasmus to More, the want of money. So, bearing this one letter of introduction from Froben's editor to Sir Thomas More, Speaker of the English House of Commons, Holbein went forth one summer morning of 1526 to seek his fortune in a strange land. . . .

"Master Haunce," as we find Holbein colloquially called in England, arrived in London towards the close of 1526. The influence of the Renaissance, which had already left its mark on public buildings and monuments, had not extended to houses of ordinary size, which were still built chiefly of wood and mud, and set close together in very narrow streets; the rooms were usually small and dark, and the flooring of the lower story was commonly merely the beaten earth on which the house was built. Each tradesman hung out a swinging sign above his shop, and besides shops many booths and stalls were placed in the crowded streets. Carriages were happily extremely rare; those who did not ride went on foot, but even so the streets were intensely thronged.

From the highest to the lowest all London jostled and hustled in the narrow ways noisy with screaming cries of the hawkers and keepers of booths and stalls. . . .

On his arrival Holbein passed through the noisy city till he reached the green riverside country at Chelsea, where Sir Thomas More lived. Here he was welcomed for the sake of Erasmus, and here he remained throughout his first visit to England. Here too he met Archbishop Warham, Nicholas Kratzer, and Fisher, who was destined to become More's fellow-martyr. These and many others gave him sittings, and he also made drawings and studies of More and his household—studies intended to be used for the great group of the More family—a picture which however remained forever unfinished.

In the summer of 1528 that dreaded malady, the Plague, broke out in England, and for fear of infection, or else by order of his guild, our painter returned to Basle, where he finished the decorations for the town hall [begun in 1521, and now no longer in existence]. But Basle was the Basle of his youth no longer. Froben was dead, Erasmus, Meyer, and the majority of the cultured class had abandoned the city to the zeal of the Reformers. Holbein could not adapt himself to the new order of things, and in the autumn of 1531 we find him once more in London. Three years had brought great changes to England. The breach between Pope and King was daily widening, and a few months after Holbein's return, the resignation of More from the Lord Chancellorship brought an end to the painter's hopes of court patronage. In the meantime he was working for the German merchants of the Steelyard, and had settled himself in the parish of St. Andrew Undershaft, which was his home for the remainder of his life. . . .

It is about 1537 that we find the first evidence of Holbein's official connection with the Court, and in this year he painted the great portrait of Henry VII. with Elizabeth of York, and Henry VIII. with Jane Seymour, for the Privy Chamber of the Palace of Westminster. The original perished in the fire which destroyed the Palace in 1698, but the composition of it is familiar to us through the small copy at Hampton Court and the large cartoon of a portion of it which is in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire. [According to the best authorities there is no oil painting of Henry VIII. by Holbein in existence.]

Hans Holbein's death, like his birth and life, is enveloped in mystery. All that we know is that in the year 1543 the Plague again attacked London, that on the seventh of October he made his will, and that on the twenty-ninth of November he was already numbered with the dead. And so, without a sign, with no word to note the day or manner of his death, or the place of his burial, the great painter, whose work is so well and whose character so little known, passes silently from the pages of history.

ALFRED WOLTMANN

"HOLBEIN UND SEINE ZEIT"

DURING the whole of the Middle Ages, princes and great lords were accustomed to have their painter, who stood in permanent connection with the court, belonged to their household, and had his position among the lowest members of it, being named in one and the same breath with stable-boys, scullions, and apothecaries. By degrees the position of the artist rose; for with the rise of his art, his personal importance also increased in the eyes of his master, and the painter not unfrequently entered into more intimate relations with his prince, and in order to give a fitting expression to such a relation, he was frequently invested with the rank and title of a "varlet de chambre," an honor which he shared with poets, musicians, and often with the court jesters. This was a great advance compared with former experiences, although the artist was still obliged to conduct himself right modestly towards the whole suite of spiritual, knightly, and political servants of the court. Such was the position of a Jan Van Eyck

at the court of Burgundy; such also the position of the painters at the Northern courts in the sixteenth century, of the three Clouets in the service of the French monarch, and equally so of Holbein at the English court, who bore the official title: "Servant to the King's Majesty."

And what had he to do in this position? In this respect the advance made above the Middle Ages was far less than that with regard to rank. The painter was and remained no more and no less than a factotum for everything that could be done with the brush. In state apartments, and in sleeping-rooms, in house and hall, in stable and kitchen, he had to arrange, to decorate, and to paint, sometimes one thing, and sometimes another, the furniture and the household matters, the coats-of-arms, and the shields, the pennons and flags of the ships, the saddles of the horses, and even the cakes that came to table. The talent and skill of painters, their imagination as well as their execution, were in demand for the scenery of festivities, for passing decorations, for exhibitions and pageants. The court painters were expected to obey all the whims and fancies of their master, trifles occupied their time, and they were obliged to expend their genius and their powers on a thousand unimportant and perishable things.

One branch of artistic activity had, however, been developed since the beginning of the fifteenth century, which gave the court painter true satisfaction, and afforded him opportunity after all his trivial occupations to gather together his powers and to work as an artist, and not as an artisan; namely, portraiture. This branch of art grew more and more in favor at courts; it became a pastime, a fashion, and a matter of luxury. Portraits appeared in all conceivable forms, in various styles, and of various sizes, sometimes as a head or a half-length figure, sometimes the whole figure, painted in oil on wooden panels of different forms, or in miniature on cards, or in frescos on the wall. They appeared in life-size, and even on a colossal scale, but still more frequently in a smaller form. In this case they formed portable objects, which could easily be taken from place to place by their possessors.

This rôle of artistic factotum Holbein was enabled to play under somewhat alleviated circumstances. Henry VIII. had a number of other painters in his service, to whom the coarsest work was usually assigned. The business of house-painter and decorator belonged to the appointed sergeant-painter at that time, the Englishman Andrew Wright. Freed from care of the most ordinary requirements of the court painter Holbein could devote himself to portrait painting. If his time was ever claimed for other matters, it was not the executing hand which was demanded from him, but his inventive mind, which was consulted in the various works of art-industry. These two kinds of artistic production to the exclusion of all others fully occupied Holbein at the English court.

Holbein certainly did not torment the people whom he painted with many repeated sittings. He depicted them, even in the sketch, with wonderful fidelity and completeness, so that this seems to have been afterwards sufficient for the painting. In numerous sheets we see short observations written in the painter's hand, relating in general to the color of the dress or of the beard and hair. Those in the Windsor Sketches, which belong to the earlier years, are in general grander in effect, and those belonging to his later residence in England are on the contrary more delicate and fine in their execution. At first he usually drew upon untinted paper, but subsequently he gave a reddish coloring to the whole sheet, which corresponded to the flesh tint of the countenance.—

FROM THE GERMAN.

The Art of Holbein

PAUL MANTZ

"HANS HOLBEIN"

WE have been taught to see in Holbein only an eminent portrait painter, but although he has undoubtedly deserved this title, his talents were less restricted, his ambitions higher. Like the Italians of the glorious age, he would have enjoyed creating vast spectacular scenes to adorn the walls of palaces and churches. Although never a literary or a learned man, he had nevertheless a taste for beautiful allegories, and was inclined to introduce a poetic or dramatic element into his compositions. He tried it indeed more than once. But of all the great scenes which Holbein undertook to depict, not one has come down to us. History would be unjustly indifferent, however, if it recorded only what survives; all that has ever lived should be held sacred, and Holbein's lost works must not be forgotten. From the drawings for them which have been preserved, it may easily be seen that he was not merely a portrait painter. His works which have been destroyed by fire can be approximately reconstructed, and we feel sure that in his decorative paintings there was an enthusiastic feeling for complicated and stirring scenes, a confident and vigorous touch, in short a sympathy for the art of the past in which the primitive qualities — introduced both consciously and unconsciously — remind one of Mantegna. The resemblance is of course very incomplete. . . . A figure somewhat shortened, a drapery with massive folds, betray here and there that Holbein was of German origin. But these occasional effects, which it would be surprising not to meet with in an artist of Augsburg, should not change one's estimate of the general character of his drawing, and of his thought. To the traditions of his country, more and more forgotten in Basle and in London, Holbein was happily unfaithful. His ideal is very *mixed*. Although his Italianism shows itself at times, yet to be just it must be acknowledged that the decorator of the Town Hall and of the Steelyard takes true satisfaction in his own German realism.

It would, however, be a mistake to expect to find in Holbein a man who was in any way bewildered by the ideal. He was usually calm, his flights of fancy were not of long duration, and his mind never lingered among dreams. He lived in the world of realities very willingly, and even when inclined to soar into the realm of fiction, was continually brought back to every-day fact by the study of the faces of his contemporaries — by portraiture.

If the exact portrayal of the human countenance does not include the whole of Holbein's talent, it constitutes at least an essential part of his genius and of his work. Here the master has been indefatigable, full of will and decision. It has been remarked that in most of Holbein's portraits there is a certain air of sadness. The world in which the artist lived was, as we know, absorbed in serious affairs. The early years of the sixteenth century were strangely troubled ones; the bitterness of religious controversies tormented honest consciences, and a somewhat sad gravity might well be accorded to the men who participated and suffered in these spiritual battles.

And Holbein was true to his principle; he did not give a moral character to his models, from any preconceived idea. Even if exercised discreetly this would have been a deviation from the truth, and Holbein did not lie. He was as exact in representing the expression of the inner man as in depicting his features. . . . He had no wish to transform his models into heroes. We know, thanks to him, the "make-up" of their natural refinement or their ugliness, and he has told us, as plainly as is possible with the brush, what was transpiring in their minds. This is why Holbein is above all an historian. But his portraits are not merely notes to be made use of by the chroniclers, they are superb paint-

ings, which forcibly impress us with their strength and their character. The faithful historian was at the same time a powerful artist, whose manual skill is incomparable. In order to construct a figure and give it life, he draws with a vigor equalling that of the most learned masters, and for skilful and delicate modelling of flesh it seems as if Leonardo da Vinci himself had imparted to him the secret.—FROM THE FRENCH.

WILHELM LÜBKE

"HISTORY OF ART"

HOLBEIN is not only one of the most precocious geniuses in the history of art, appearing as an excellent painter in his eighteenth year, but he also belongs to the few painters of the North who were imbued with the qualities of the Italian school, and at the same time developed them in an independent manner. He is the sole Northern painter of that day, not even excepting Dürer, who attained to a free, magnificent style, broke away from the wretchedly depraved taste of his contemporaries, and portrayed the human form in all its truth and beauty. In many respects he may be compared to the great Peter Vischer, who in the same way burst the narrow bounds of the art of his fatherland, without sacrificing the strength, depth, and freshness of the genuine German artist.

ALFRED WOLTMANN

"HOLBEIN UND SEINE ZEIT"

IN depicting each separate personage, Holbein took the point of view which each required in himself, and gave to each all that belonged to him, so that in looking at his portraits we think only of the individual represented, and can entirely forget the artist who has brought him before us.

This important quality of the portrait painter, that of placing his own subjectivity subordinate to the object represented, has belonged to but few artists in a like degree. Albrecht Dürer, however much he strives in portraiture to retain the smallest details, allows his own nature to appear just as distinctly as the character of the person represented. . . . Leonardo da Vinci, whose portraits in many ways show affinity with those of Holbein, as far as regards their delicate perfection of execution and their acuteness of individualization, is really only at ease in portraiture when he has to represent female characters of a certain kind, whose secret inner life he traces tenderly and profoundly, seeking to read it as an enigma. Titian, again, can scarcely depict any but noble natures. Though master of every means to make his figures appear round and lifelike, yet truth in depicting the natural appearance is never his real aim. He does not represent the man himself, but borrows from him only the idea of a free poetic figure of the heroic style, who seems by the magic of colors to be transported into a higher existence.

So, also, the great portrait painter of the following century, Van Dyck, whom we are most inclined to compare with Holbein, because he labored on the same soil, is the painter entirely of the aristocratic circles, and is in himself aristocratic in his conception. Holbein depicts men as they are, Van Dyck as they behave. Even in those who have felt most deeply the storms of life, Van Dyck subdues gloominess and care into slight and interesting melancholy. When Holbein depicts a man, he thinks of nothing else but him—he isolates him, he places him before us in unbiased objective truth. Van Dyck, on the contrary, cannot forbear thinking, not merely of the subject of his painting, but also of the spectator, whom he seeks to interest and to fill with sympathy. In this he only does what the people themselves were wont to do, so soon as they appeared before the world. Had Holbein's contemporaries, however, deemed this necessary, his eye would nevertheless have keenly penetrated the veil. Though laden with ornament and arrayed in festive garments, Holbein had seen them at their work, in the midst of all the cares and perplexities of active every-day life. In these men the whole seriousness of their age is

stamped — of that grand and agitated epoch in which contests were fought which had been prepared for centuries, and in which the soil was created for the deeds of succeeding ages.

In closer relation to Holbein than Van Dyck stands Velasquez, who shares his capacity for exact and absolute truthfulness to life. Yet there seems to be nothing more different than the delicate and careful execution of the paintings of the German master and the breadth and boldness of the Spaniard. But that Holbein was capable of this also, when it seemed to him suitable, is shown by his sketches and cursory outlines, and is exhibited in a work such as the cartoon in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire, or in Holbein's family picture at Basle.

If we look, however, for one among his own contemporaries who shows the most affinity with him in portraiture, we can turn to no other than Raphael. He too combines the utmost individual distinctness with the most delicate taste, and in his picture of Leo X., reaches that perfection so especially admired in Holbein, a perfection exhibited in the faithful execution of subordinate things, of the prayer-book with miniatures, of the bell on the table, of the mirror on the back of the chair, in which the whole scene is reflected, because all these accessories seemed to produce the tone of feeling suitable to the representation of this personage.

Realism, however, does not remain Holbein's ultimate and highest aim, and even his grand importance as a portrait painter, which formed for a long time his sole reputation, does not proceed from this alone. His eye was so organized that, like the old Dutch painters, he perceived all the details of nature with the utmost exactness. At the same time, however, he understood what they did not understand — namely, to draw back a step, and to see that which he represented not only in detail, but also as a whole. Thus there is for him a higher truth than that which exists in the absolute delineation of various things; he recognizes the general laws which lie at their foundation, and he passes over the cleft which in Northern art generally speaking lies between the *characteristic* and the *beautiful*.

J. A. CROWE

"ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA"

HOLBEIN'S portraits all display that uncommon facility for seizing character which his father enjoyed before him, and which he had inherited in an expanded form. No amount of labor, no laboriousness of finish — and of both he was ever prodigal — betrayed him into loss of resemblance or expression. No painter was ever quicker at noting peculiarities of physiognomy, and it may be observed that in none of his faces, as indeed in none of the faces one sees in nature, are the two sides alike. Yet he was not a child of the sixteenth century, as the Venetians were, in substituting touch for line. We must not look in his works for modulations of surface or subtle contrasts of color in juxtaposition. His method was to the very last delicate, finished, and smooth, as became a painter of the old school.

SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON

"ADDRESS, ROYAL ACADEMY," 1893

HARDLY less important than Nuremberg as a centre of wealth and commerce, or in its love of art, was the great Swabian city, Augsburg, the home of those princes among the merchants of this day, the Fuggers; and of the genius of the Swabian school, Hans Holbein the Younger is the noblest product and the supreme glory. I say the Swabian school; for although the name of Holbein is closely connected with Basle, where he long resided, he was born at Augsburg, in which town his father, himself an artist of great gifts, lived and worked. In Holbein we have a complete contrast to Dürer; a man not prone to theorize, not steeped in speculation, a dreamer of no dreams; without passion

but full of joyous fancies, he looked out with serene eyes upon the world around him; accepting Nature without preoccupation or afterthought, but with a keen sense of all her subtle beauties, loving her simply and for herself. As a draughtsman he displayed a flow, a fulness of form, and an almost classic restraint which are wanting in the work of Dürer, and are, indeed, not found elsewhere in German art. As a colorist, he had a keen sense of the values of tone relations, a sense in which Dürer again was lacking; not so Teutonic in every way as the Nuremberg master, he formed a link between the Italian and the German races. A less powerful personality than Dürer, he was a far superior painter. Proud may that country be indeed that counts two names so great in art.

JEAN ROUSSEAU

"HANS HOLBEIN"

WHEN I think of Holbein, I picture to myself one of those giants of the North who led the Germanic races to the assault of the Latin world. Never has champion of art been armed like Holbein to challenge Italy in all directions and on every side. He rivals Leonardo in subtlety and depth of expression, as well as in the power of interpreting character and life in his portraits. With an originality which equals that of Veronese, he understands the art of enriching and aggrandizing his pictures by means of sumptuous architecture. Mantegna has become famous through his "Triumph of Cæsar;" Holbein composed two similar friezes, allegorical in subject, the "Triumph of Riches" and the "Triumph of Poverty." Raphael is the immortal painter of Madonnas; Holbein painted but one—but that one is worthy to be compared with the "Madonna di San Sisto." With Titian alone Holbein cannot compete in richness of coloring, and only by Benvenuto Cellini is he surpassed in his marvellous designs for jewelry, and curious devices for the carving of sword-hilts and dagger-sheaths, cups, vases, etc.

Germany has never produced another genius so versatile as Holbein, and he is the more astonishing, coming as he does immediately after the German masters of the fifteenth century, so stiff and rigid, and so bound down by their Gothic limitations, that even Dürer could not entirely free himself from their traditions.—FROM THE FRENCH.

The German School of Painting

1358 TO 1862

JOHN C. VAN DYKE

"HISTORY OF PAINTING"

THE Teutonic lands, like most of the countries of Europe, received their first art impulse from Christianity through Italy. The centre of the faith was at Rome, and from there the influence in art spread west and north; and in each land it was modified by local peculiarities of type and temperament. In Germany, even in the early days, though Christianity was the theme of early illuminations, miniatures, and the like, and though there was a traditional form reaching back to Italy and Byzantium, yet under it was the Teutonic type—the material, awkward, rather coarse Germanic point of view. The wish to realize native surroundings was apparent from the beginning. . . . In wall-painting a poor quality of work was executed in the churches as early as the ninth century, and probably earlier. Panel-painting seems to have come into existence before the thirteenth century, and was used for altar decorations. The panels were done in tempera, with figures in light colors upon gold grounds. The spirituality of the age, with a mingling of northern sentiment, appeared in the figure. This figure was at times

graceful, and again awkward and archaic, according to the place of production, and the influence of either France or Italy.

In the fourteenth century the influence of France began to show strongly in willowy figures, long flowing draperies, and sentimental poses. The artists along the Rhine showed this more than those in the provinces to the east, where a ruder if freer art appeared. The best panel-painting of the time was done at Cologne, where we meet with the name of the first painter, Meister Wilhelm, and where a school was established usually known as the School of Cologne, which probably got its sentimental inclination, shown in slight forms and tender expression, from France, but derived much of its technique from the Netherlands. . . .

German art, though begun in the fourteenth century, showed but little depth or breadth until the fifteenth, and no real individual strength until the sixteenth century. It lagged behind the other countries of Europe, and produced the cramped archaic altar-piece. Then, when printing was invented, the painter-engraver came into existence. The two kinds of art—painting and engraving—being produced by the one man led to much detailed line work with the brush. Engraving is an influence to be borne in mind in examining the painting of this period.

The Franconian division of the German school had for its centre Nuremberg, and its most famous early master was Wohlgemuth (1434-1519). . . . There was in his work, chiefly altar-pieces, an advance in characterization, nobility of expression, and quiet dignity; and it was his good fortune to be the master of one of the most thoroughly original painters of all the German schools—Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), who holds first rank in the German art of the Renaissance, not only on account of his technical ability, but also because of his imagination, sincerity, and striking originality. Dürer's influence was wide-spread throughout Germany, especially in engraving, of which he was a master. . . .

The Swabian division of the German school includes a number of painters who were located at different places; for example at Colmar, Ulm, and Augsburg; and in the sixteenth century there was a concentration of artistic force about this last named city, which toward the close of the preceding century, had come into competition with Nuremberg, and rather outranked it in splendor. It was at Augsburg that the Renaissance art in Germany showed in more restful composition, less angularity, better modelling and painting, and more sense of the *ensemble* of a picture. Hans Burckmair (1473-1531) was the founder of the so-called school of Augsburg, and next to him comes the celebrated Holbein family, of whom Hans Holbein the Younger holds with Dürer the high place in German art. . . .

The two men were widely different in their points of view and in their work. Dürer was an idealist seeking after a type, a religious painter, a painter of panels with the spirit of an engraver. . . . Holbein was emphatically a realist, finding material in the actual life about him, a designer of cartoons and large wall-paintings in something of the Italian spirit, a man who painted religious themes with but little spiritual signification. In composition and drawing he appeared at times to be following Mantegna and the northern Italians; in brush-work he resembled the Flemings, especially Massys; yet he was never an imitator of either Italian or Flemish painting. His wall-paintings have perished, but the drawings from them are preserved, and show him as an artist of much invention. He is now known chiefly by his portraits. His facility in grasping physiognomy and realizing character, the quiet dignity of his composition, his firm modelling, clear outline, harmonious coloring, excellent detail, and easy solid painting, all place him in the front rank of great painters.

Of the small Saxon division of the German school of painting Lucas Cranach the

Elder (1472-1553) was the leader. His work was fantastic, odd in conception and execution, sometimes ludicrous, and always archaic-looking; but his pictures were typical of the time and country, and for that and for their strong individuality are ranked among the most interesting paintings of the German school. Lucas Cranach the Younger followed his father closely, but was a weaker painter. Although there were many pupils, the Saxon school did not go beyond the Cranach family.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were unrelieved centuries of decline in German painting. After Dürer, Holbein, and Cranach had passed, there came about a senseless imitation of Italy, combined with an equally senseless imitation of detail in nature, that produced nothing worthy of the name of original or genuine art. . . .

In the first part of the nineteenth century there started in Germany a so-called "revival of art" led by Friedrich Overbeck and a few others, and brought about by the study of monumental painting in Italy, and the taking-up of the religious spirit in a pre-Raphaelite manner; but like many another revival of art it did not amount to much.

The whole academic tendency of modern painting in Germany for the past fifty years has not been favorable to the best kind of pictorial art, and the men to-day who are the great artists of Germany are less followers of the German tradition than individuals, each working in a style peculiar to himself.

MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN SCHOOL

WILHELM OF COLOGNE, flourished 1358-78 — Stephen Lochner, flourished 1442-51 — Master of Liesborn, flourished 1465 — Michael Wohlgemuth, 1434-1519 — Master of the Lyversberg Passion, flourished 1463-80 — Israel von Meckenlen, 1440-1503 — Martin Schongauer, 1450-88 — Matthias Grünewald, about 1460 to after 1529 — Master Christophorus, flourished 1500-10 — Master of the Death of the Virgin, flourished 1515-56 — Hans Holbein the elder, about 1460-1523, and his brother Sigmund Holbein, 1465 to after 1540 — Albrecht Dürer, 1471-1528 — Lucas Cranach, 1472-1553 — Hans Burkemair, 1473-1531 — Hans Fuss (Von Kulmbach), pupil of A. Dürer, died about 1522 — Albrecht Altdorfer, born before 1480-1538 — Hans Leonard Schaufelin, 1490-1540 — Hans Holbein the younger, 1497-1543 — Hans Sebald Beham, 1500-50, and his brother Barthel Beham, 1502 to about 1540 — Heinrich Aldegrever, 1502-58 — Virgil Solis, 1514-62 — Lucas Cranach the younger, 1515-86 — Jost. Amman, 1531-91 — Heinrich Golzius, 1558-1617 — Johann Rottenhammer, 1564-1623 — Adam Elshaimer, 1574-1620 — Joachim von Sandrart, 1606-88 — Balthasar Denner, 1685-1747 — Christ. Will. Ernst Dietrich, 1712-74 — Anton Raphael Mengs, 1728-78 — Peter von Cornelius, 1783-1867 — Johann Fried. Overbeck, 1789-1869 — Fried. Wil. von Schadow, 1789-1862.

The Works of Holbein

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

"THE MEYER MADONNA"

GRAND-DUCAL PALACE: DARMSTADT

IN the year 1526, shortly before his departure for England, and at a time when the doctrines of the Reformation had already taken root in Basle, Holbein gave his services with impartial spirit to the Roman Catholic cause by painting, at the request of the Burgomaster Jacob Meyer, an altar-piece representing Meyer and his family in adoration and under the protection of the Virgin. The Madonna with the Christ-Child in

her arms stands in the centre of the picture. On one side kneels Meyer with his two sons, and opposite them are seen his deceased first wife and his then living second wife and only daughter. Underneath the figures is spread a rich carpet, and behind them, forming the background, is a piece of Renaissance decoration. "In this work," writes Lübke, "Holbein appears as one of the first among the painters of simple votive pictures. It is not the ravishing force of lofty beauty, not the spirited nobility of important characters, but the fervid devoutness and genuine sentiment, which will always endear it to all hearts."

The subject of the painting has been variously explained. By some it has been thought to be commemorative of the recovery of a sick child, and Mr. Ruskin, advocating this theory, has written: "The received tradition respecting the Holbein Madonna is beautiful, and I believe the interpretation to be true. A father and mother have prayed to her for the life of their sick child. She appears to them, her own Child in her arms. She puts down her Christ before them — takes their child into her arms instead — it lies down upon her bosom and stretches its hands to its father and mother, saying farewell." Another explanation is that the child standing below has been restored to health, the Infant Jesus having taken upon himself the sickness. Again, it has been suggested that the child in the Virgin's arms is the soul of a baby who has died. But, after all, the true meaning of the picture seems to be a very simple one, and the present official account reads: "Jacob Meyer, Burgomaster of Basle, kneels worshipping with his family before the Virgin Mary, who holds the Infant Christ in her arms."

Until the year 1822 this masterpiece of Holbein's was known to the world by the replica or copy in the Dresden Gallery. A singular controversy waged for many years in regard to the authenticity of the two pictures, and was not finally settled until 1871, when at the Holbein exhibition held in Dresden in that year, the two pictures were brought together and hung side by side. It was then decided by competent critics that the Darmstadt Madonna was "the undoubtedly genuine original by Hans Holbein the younger," and the Dresden example a "free copy by an unknown artist."

(For an account of the "Holbein Controversy," as it has been called, see the interesting article in "Old and New," (April, 1872), by S. R. Koehler, entitled "The Battle of the Madonnas.")

"HOLBEIN'S WIFE AND CHILDREN"

BASLE MUSEUM

"ONE of Holbein's first works, after his return to his home" (in 1529), writes Knackfuss, "was perhaps this portrait of his wife and children, which is one of the most striking pictures of the Basle Museum. We see here Frau Elsbeth with two children, a fair boy and a little girl with reddish hair. The figures are life-size, painted in oils upon paper, and then cut out, and pasted upon a panel of wood, and the whole work is a masterpiece—a marvellous rendering of nature. It seems as if the painter had represented his models just as chance had placed them before him; and yet how well considered and adjusted the work is! A woman past her first youth, two healthy, but by no means unusually charming children, all three in the simplest sort of attire,—the tasteless dress of the mother cut low in the neck, according to the fashion which prevailed at that time in Basle, is dark green. A narrow band of brown fur on an overgarment of the same color as the dress, and a thin veil over her rather light hair, which is arranged at the back of her head in a reddish brown cap, are the only ornaments. The boy wears a dusky greenish-blue smock frock, and the baby a colorless little gown of some light woolen material. With this has Holbein created a picture perfect in its beauty of light and shade, in the flow of its lines, and in the harmony of its colors."

"PORTRAIT OF GEORG GYZE"

BERLIN GALLERY

IN the year 1532, during Holbein's second sojourn in London, he painted several portraits of German merchants of the Steelyard—members of the Hanseatic League who were settled in London. One of the finest of these portraits is that of Georg GYZE, of which Mr. Ruskin has written: "Every accessory is perfect with a fine perfection: the carnations in the glass vase by his side—the ball of gold, chased with blue enamel, suspended on the wall—the books—the steelyard—the papers on the table, the sealing, with its quartered bearings,—all intensely there, and there in beauty of which no one could have dreamed that even flowers or gold were capable, far less parchment or steel. But every change of shade is felt; every rich and rubied line of petal followed; every subdued gleam in the soft blue of the enamel and bending of the gold touched with a hand whose patience of regard creates rather than paints. The jewel itself was not so precious as the rays of enduring light which form it, and flash from it, beneath that errorless hand. The man himself, what he was—not more; but to all conceivable proof of sight—in all aspect of life or thought—not less. He sits alone in his accustomed room, his common work laid out before him; he is conscious of no presence, assumes no dignity, bears no sudden or superficial look of care or interest, lives only as he lived—but forever."

"CHRISTINA, DUCHESS OF MILAN"

NATIONAL GALLERY: LONDON

AFTER the death of Jane Seymour, many candidates were proposed for the honor of alliance with Henry VIII. Among them all none seemed to be so acceptable to the king as the young and widowed Duchess of Milan. Daughter of the King of Denmark, and niece of Charles V., Emperor of Germany, she had, when a child, been wedded to Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, who died soon after their marriage. As a union with the King of England was desirable for political reasons, the Emperor of Germany eagerly received the news of Henry's inclination; and accordingly the English court decided to despatch a painter to Brussels, where the young Duchess then was, to take a portrait of her. Hans Holbein was selected for this purpose; and from the three hours' sketch which he then made, he afterwards painted this picture of Christina. She was then just sixteen years old.

"I know no portrait," writes Wornum, "that I can compare with it for simplicity and grandeur combined; both paint and painter are forgotten in looking at a work like this; you see only the incarnate spirit, and feel its very sphere. Though the woman is really not beautiful, her expression is fascinating in the highest degree. The rich brown eyes, with the yellow ring immediately round the pupil, seem to admit you to the secrets of her thoughts, and the full pouting cherry lips irresistibly command admiration. The beauty of this exquisite portrait is indeed beyond ordinary powers of description."

Christina stands before us dressed in deep mourning. She wears a little black cap which entirely conceals her hair. Her gown is of black satin, over which is a long garment also black, and lined with sable. Around the neck and wrists are narrow white frills, and in her hands she holds a long light glove. A ruby ring, on the third finger of her left hand, is her sole ornament. "She is not so delicately fair as the deceased queen," wrote Hutton, the English envoy in Flanders, "but she hath a good countenance; and when she smiles, two little dimples appear in her cheeks, and one in her chin. . . . She is very friendly, very graceful in her bearing, and soft in speech. She seems to be of few words; and she lisps somewhat in talking, which does not become her badly."

It is said that Henry was so charmed with Holbein's portrait of the Duchess that he

immediately sent her a proposal of marriage, which, however, she declined, saying that she would gladly have accepted the honor had she "possessed two heads." This reply however is fictitious, for Christina was apparently by no means averse to becoming queen of England; and when urged by the ambassador, Wriothesley, to confide in him her personal inclination, blushed deeply, and said, "My inclination? What am I to say?" And then added, smilingly, "You know I am the Emperor's poor servant, and must obey his will." Charles V.'s friendly feelings towards England having undergone a change, however, the alliance never took place.

"PORTRAIT OF A MAN WITH HIS CHILD" STÄDEL INSTITUTE: FRANKFORT

THIS picture of an unknown man and his child was, according to Passavant, one of the works of Holbein's early years in Basle. "It is painted," says this writer, "with the keenest perception, and with a force and vigor which show him to be even then the most finished painter of the German school of that time."

"PORTRAIT OF ERASMUS"

LOUVRE: PARIS

"HOLBEIN'S Erasmus is immortal," writes Paul Mantz. "The philosopher is represented in profile, engaged in his daily work, and is absorbed in thought; that strong hand of his quietly transferring to paper the ideas which he has carefully pondered. The accuracy of the drawing is incomparable. It would have been impossible to depict with greater exactness the delicacy of that profile at the same time so austere yet so expressive of a subtle humor, and those lips closed by the long habit of caution. It is always astonishing that with merely material means — with colors, oil, and a brush — an artist can express the innermost thought, and, so to speak, make visible the invisible. Certainly this power, which partakes of the nature of sorcery, has seldom been carried so far as in the portrait of Erasmus by Holbein."

"PORTRAIT OF JANE SEYMOUR"

IMPERIAL GALLERY: VIENNA

"THIS portrait," writes Woltmann, "shows that in the technical execution, and in the background tint which he chose, Holbein ever accommodated himself to the subject he was depicting, and that a colder or warmer proportion of light and shade did not merely belong to certain periods of his artistic progress, but that he, at the same time, allowed sometimes the one and sometimes the other to prevail, according to the personage whom he was delineating. Jane Seymour was famed for her pure fairness, and therefore this cold and delicate tint, with its faint grey shadows, was suited for her portrait, and Holbein has produced nothing more beautiful. She appears in the most splendid costume, an under-dress of silver brocade, over which she wears a gown of deep red velvet. Wherever it is possible, rich gold ornament is introduced; her dress and her cap of the well-known angular form are studded with pearls, and a chain of pearls is round her neck, from which is suspended a rich jewelled ornament. The whole is executed in miniature-like perfection; and in spite of this splendor, this glittering profusion, the countenance of the queen outshines all the rest with its wonderfully delicate and clear tint. How soft and fine are the hands quietly resting in each other, and emerging from cuffs of exquisitely finished Spanish work! How beautifully the face is modelled, and how delicate the effect of the grey shadows! Her eyes do not seek the spectator, but look calmly forth, and one is especially impressed by the untroubled serenity of her brow."

"PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF NORFOLK" ROYAL GALLERY: WINDSOR

THOMAS HOWARD, Duke of Norfolk and Lord High Admiral of England, was at the summit of his greatness when Holbein painted his portrait in 1540. He is represented in a dark coat trimmed with ermine and displaying the red sleeves of the jerkin underneath, and is decorated with the collar of the Order of the Garter and the badge of St. George. In one hand he holds the gold baton as Earl Marshal, and in the other the white staff of the Lord Chamberlain.

"PORTRAIT OF HUBERT MORETT"¹

ROYAL GALLERY: DRESDEN

THE portrait of Hubert Morett, a distinguished jeweller in the service of Henry VIII., and the friend and fellow-laborer of Holbein, belongs to the period of the painter's second visit to England.

Morett is represented as richly dressed in black satin, silk and taffeta, with a broad collar of sable. In one hand he holds a glove, while the other rests on the gilt sheath of a dagger. He wears a black cap with a cameo, and around his neck a gold chain. A curtain of green damask forms the background. Woltmann writes: "There is no painting in any public collection more fitted to exhibit Holbein at his height as a portrait painter, combining the utmost truth with the finest taste, than the splendid portrait of Morett in the Dresden Gallery. This work, that of Georg Gyze at Berlin, and Jane Seymour at Vienna, are the most beautiful portraits by Holbein in German collections; three productions which, differing from each other completely in bearing and style, stand forth as the solution of three wholly different artistic tasks. On each occasion the conception and treatment perfectly suit the personage designed."

For many years this work was attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, and not until 1860 was the final restitution made to Holbein. Wornum tells us that "the late King of Saxony, Friedrich August, there not being any Leonardo in the collection, objected to the change of name, and the consequent exclusion of the great Florentine from his gallery: the restitution therefore could not take place till after that king's death." This same writer calls the picture "one of the completest of Holbein's portraits, and one of the finest of his works." Of the original drawing for it which now hangs in the Dresden gallery beside the painting, he writes: "For force and truth this drawing is quite unsurpassed; it shows what can be accomplished by the point, without the aid of color, when guided by a hand that obeys with the minutest mechanical precision the control of an eye that nothing can escape, or the balance of a judgment by which nothing is too minute to be measured."

"PORTRAIT OF ROBERT CHESEMAN"

GALLERY OF THE HAGUE

THIS portrait of the king's falconer represents him as richly dressed in a dark fur-lined cloak showing the red sleeves of a jacket worn underneath. His grey hair is partly covered by a black cap, and on his left wrist he holds a falcon. The background of the picture is dark green, and on it can be read his name and age as well as the date of the painting.

In Sir Joshua Reynolds's notes, made when in Holland in the year 1781, this picture is spoken of as "admirable for its truth and precision, and extremely well colored."

¹Recent authorities consider that this portrait represents not Hubert Morett, the jeweller, but Charles de Solier, Sieur (or Count) de Morette, envoy from Francis I. to the English court; and this identification has now been adopted in the official catalogue of the Dresden Gallery.

THE PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS OF HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER
WITH THEIR PRESENT LOCATIONS

ANTWERP MUSEUM: Portrait of Erasmus—AUGSBURG CATHEDRAL: Wings of an Altar-Piece—BASLE MUSEUM: Adam and Eve; The Dead Christ; The Last Supper; Descent from the Cross; Virgin and Child; Christ Crowned with Thorns, and the Mother of Sorrows; Two Heads of Saints; School-master's Sign-board; Portrait of Jacob Meyer and of His Wife Dorothea Kannengiesser; Holbein's Wife and Children (Plate II); Portrait of Georg Schweiger; Portrait of Bonifacius Amerbach; Portrait of Erasmus; Lais Corinthiaca; Venus—BERLIN GALLERY: Portrait of Georg Gyze (Plate III); Two Portraits of Young Men—BRUNSWICK GALLERY: Portrait of Cyriacus Fallen—CASSEL GALLERY: Portrait of an Unknown Man—CARLSRUHE MUSEUM: Saint Ursula and Saint George—DARMSTADT, GRAND-DUCAL PALACE: The Meyer Madonna (Plate I)—DARMSTADT GALLERY: Portrait of a Young Man—DRESDEN, ROYAL GALLERY: Portrait of Hubert Morett (Plate IX); Sir Thomas Godsalve and His Son—FLORENCE, UFFIZI GALLERY: Portrait of Sir Richard Southwell—FRANKFORT, STÄDEL INSTITUTE: Portrait of Sir George of Cornwall; Portrait of a Man with His Child (Plate V)—FREIBURG CATHEDRAL: Two Altar Panels—THE HAGUE, GALLERY: Portrait of Robert Cheseman (Plate X); Portrait of a Young Woman—HAMPTON COURT: Portrait of John Reskymer; Lady Vaux—HANOVER, WELFEN MUSEUM: Edward VI. when a Child; Portrait of Melanchthon—LISBON, ROYAL PALACE: Fountain of Life—LONDON, NATIONAL GALLERY: "The Ambassadors;" Christina, Duchess of Milan (Loaned) (Plate IV)—LONDON, POLE CAREW COLLECTION: Portraits of Sir William and Lady Butts—LONDON, GROSVENOR HOUSE: Portrait of Sir Bryan Tuke—LONDON, LAMBETH PALACE: Portrait of Archbishop Warham—LONDON, HUTH COLLECTION: Portrait of Sir Thomas More—LONDON, RIDGWAY COLLECTION: Portrait of Thomas Cromwell—LONDON, COMPANY OF THE BARBERS: Henry VIII. and the Barber Surgeons (partly by Holbein)—MUNICH GALLERY: Portrait of Sir Bryan Tuke; Portrait of Derick Born—PARIS, LOUVRE: Portrait of Nicholas Kratzer; Portrait of Erasmus (Plate VI); Portrait of Archbishop Warham; Portrait of Anne of Cleves; Portrait of Sir Henry Wyatt; Portrait of a Young Man; Portrait of Sir Richard Southwell—PRAGUE MUSEUM: Portrait of Lady Vaux—SALISBURY, LONGFORD CASTLE: Portrait of Erasmus—SOLOTHURN, MUNICIPAL GALLERY: Virgin and Child—TURIN GALLERY: Portrait of Erasmus—VIENNA, IMPERIAL GALLERY: Portrait of Jane Seymour (Plate VII); Portrait of Dr. Chamber; Portrait of Deryck Tybis; Portrait of a Young Man; Portrait of an Unknown Lady—WINDSOR, ROYAL GALLERY: Portraits of Sir Henry and Lady Guildford; Portrait of the Duke of Norfolk (Plate VIII); Christina, Duchess of Milan; Portrait of Derick Born.

(NOTE: The above list does not, of course, include Holbein's drawings, the most valuable collections of which are at Windsor and Basle.)

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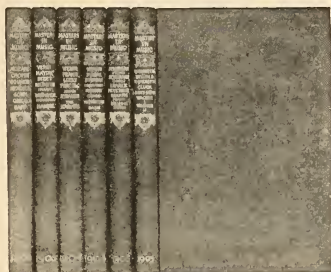
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Edited by DANIEL GREGORY MASON



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